



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News Release

Pacific Islands External Affairs Office

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Tinian Monarch Rebounds; Species Removed from Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife

Because populations of the Tinian monarch have rebounded and habitat loss is no longer a threat, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today removed Endangered Species Act protections for this forest bird that is native to the Pacific island of Tinian.

The Tinian monarch – or “Chuchurican Tinian” in the Chamorro language – is a small forest bird found only on the island of Tinian in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. This small, six-inch bird is a member of the monarch flycatcher family. It has a light reddish chest and neck, olive brown back, dark brown wings and tail, white wing bars, white rump, and a white-tipped tail. Tinian monarchs forage and breed throughout the entire island in both the non-native tangantangan forests and the native limestone forests.

“The ability of the monarch to survive and thrive despite previous changes to its habitat is a testimony to the hardiness of this unique island bird,” said David B. Allen, Regional Director of the Service’s Pacific Region.

The Tinian monarch was originally listed as an endangered species on June 2, 1970, because the population was extremely small. The primary threat to the species was habitat loss. This resulted both from forest clear-cutting prior to World War II for cattle grazing and sugarcane farming, and from extensive construction during the war. The monarch began to thrive as soon as tangantangan forests grew back, replacing the native forests. A survey of the monarch population in 1982 showed that approximately 37,000 birds inhabited the island, and the species was subsequently reclassified to threatened status. A survey conducted in 1996 indicated that the population had increased to approximately 56,000 birds.

“Unlike many other endangered and threatened species, the Tinian monarch has managed to use non-native and native habitat to increase its population,” said Jeff Newman, acting field supervisor for the Service’s Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. “However, the Tinian monarch is the exception to the rule. Most endangered and threatened species depend on native habitats for their survival. It is important to protect and conserve native habitat and prevent new alien species from becoming established not only in Tinian, but throughout the Pacific.”

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The Tinian monarch remains protected under Commonwealth laws. The Service, in cooperation with others, will continue to monitor the status of the species for at least five years.

Copies of the final rule may be downloaded from the Service's Web site at **<http://pacificislands.fws.gov>**. Copies are also available by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service office in Honolulu, 808-792-9400.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 Fish and Wildlife Management offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.